ALBERT GERALD SAYRE

RADIOMAN

MacGREGOR ARCTIC EXPEDITION 1937--38

OPERATING WAWG--OX2QY--W1OXAB

BASED AT ETAH, GREENLAND 78 19 N 72 48 W

1414 NOrth Vernon Street,
Arlington, Virginia.
23 December 1949.

Dear Herb OM:

First, please pardon both my lack of writing before, and this ancient paper. I still have some of it on hand, so am trying to use it up. I feel like a dirty stinker when I now realize that you have been tied up there for so long. Surely I could have done better and written!

Iva just brought forth your Xmas note from a year ago, and that plus your card this year makes me feel rather bitter towards myself for not writing earlier and often to you. What happened to you Herb? We never did learn what your ailment was, so please let us know all the dope. Also the news around town of the old crew at the police setup.

It surely was nice to hear from you anyway Herb. Ill try and give you a little news from this way now.

I am still working for the Army here in a position known as an electrical engineer. We are on secret work which I am not allowed to say a thing. It is neither atomic or communications work, but does use many vacuum tubes in special circuitry. It is the same type of work as when I first came out here, and looks like it will continue for a long time to come. I work for and under a group of smart engineers, and some times, my past experience with things helps me out too, in the practical ways of doing things, thanks to ham radio and other experiences. It is an interesting field, but we are under a constant worry that we spill the beans so to speak. We are all very carefully gone over as to our past and even present contacts and friends, etc, as you read in the papers about other branches of the goverhmebt out here. Even had FBI agents visit me in my home unknown to me till afterwards. Hi. Such a life. Surely dont call it so much my own as I used to! Oh well, such is life! I am earning a living and have my swell wife and a home anyway.

We bought a place at this address in 1946, and are slowly getting it salted away, so some day it will be ours we hope. It is a brick two story home on a 75' X 150' lot in a fairly nice residential district of Arlington County. Sidewalks, but no curb and gutter, with macadam topped street. Sewer, water, gas, electric, and garbage disposal services, etc. This all in a place of over 100,000 population, but still under a county form of government! Surely peculiar to me! Have a county manager system, with an elected board. Neither too good nor too bad it appears to me now.

Our home has a nice dry basement under the whole house. Have hot water heating system which burns oil. Gas hot water heating system. We use electric stove,etc, in kitchen, but also have a gas range in the base--ment when Iva cares to use it. She has the usual washing setup in basement. The first floor has two nice bedrooms with large closets each, and the bath between them. A large living room with a nice fireplace at the north end of it. A small dining room, and a rather small kitchen, but these fit us two quite well at that. I use the back bedroom for radio transmitter and receiver and operating position, and still there is plenty room left should company arrive for use of the bedroom. The upstairs, or attic as we call it, has plenty of space to have two or three more rooms made out of it, but as yet we have done nothing in that direction, due to high costs of living and poor materials which have been available. We do not need them anyway. The attic is not heated, but fairly well insulated. Quite a few trees on the place to hang skywires to,but hard to work out thru with radio! Hi.

I have not been active during the past year on ham radio. A year ago in November, we bot an RCA 10" television receiver, and it really has kept me off the air, first, due to the novelty of TV, and 2nd, due to TVI which appeared on my set, and since I did not care to interfere with my neighbors, I remained off the air completely untill this fall, when my brother Merton, W5ZU, down in Roswell, New Mexico induced me to get on. I have been trying to work him on 14050 about 7PMEST on thursdays but not always with success due to changing conditions. That is the earliest he can get home out there. Often work a cousin,W7JVK, in Tuscon, on the same sked. All of us get on same freq for it. Qrm is bad at times. TV with its football, basketball, hockey, short plays, and just a variety show really keep us on the go to see them all. It is just now that we are able to turn off the set some hours each evening and not let it keep us"looking in". We seldom listen to regular radio or FM any more, except in day times. We have 4 TV stations here on channels 4,5,7, & 9. They broadcast from about 5PM till 11PM or later when something good is on. Presume you look in there too on your own station in Milwaukee, and possibly get Chicago stations too. We get one station in Baltimore only fairly well, when there is a temperature inversion. It is over 40 miles away. We only get their channel 2 station most times altho I have had channel 11 so we could distinguish what it was-no better!

To return to ham radio; I had an 802 crystal oscillator into an 807, into a pair of 813s in push pull, running with 2000 volts at 250 mils input. This whole thing is in an open rack with nothing shielded. I am presently using an Amphenol folded dipole for both trans and rec. It is only 17' off the ground, and runs right thru the center of a big hickory tree. Neither of those things allow the best signal to leave this area. I hesitate to install a rotary beam in this area, but may get up courage some future time. Hi. Presently I have pulled off the 813s stage and have on a single ended job using an 803. This was rushed together to allow me to pull the old job out and start rebuilding it with the idea of eliminating some of the offending harmonics. That has stalled, but will gradually get it on Then the exciter part is going to get a going over and hope to get the old harmonic problem finally licked when this rebuilding is completed bythe use of a large cabinet rack to completely enclose it all. So you can get some idea of why I am not on the air very much here. I do not have tools to use outside of my good arms and hands for drilling etc, so it is not much of an incentive to keep going at it. Hi. I have been using a Super-Pro as a receiver. I have another rig which has not been on since last Dec. which uses a 47 xtal es 803 final at about 100 watts. This I used on 80 CW and the NC-101X. Have a 132' center fed with EO-1 cable. This makes about a "W" shaped antenna in the yard between trees and the chimney on the house.

Another thing which has kept me off the air some is that I was fairly active at the AHS Club station where I work. They have several BC610's and Super Pros, but poor antenna systems. They are not nearly so active now.

Still another thing has been that I am still attending Naval Reserve meetings, and since last July I have been the commanding officer of an Electronic Warfare Company in Falls Church,Va. which is about 4 miles away from home. We meet once a week to obtain credit in the reserve towards our retirement when we reach 64 or something like that. Being the CO, I do put in more time on the company and naval things than when merely a member.

I like working where I do for the hours:8 till 4:30 with a 30 minutes off for lunch, five days a week, and holidays off with pay. We get 26 days annual leave with pay a year too, plus sick leave of 15 days. Also can get military leave with pay from both places when it is available. They take out retirement and taxes from our pay, so the take home is not too great, but enough to exist and get by on. We are still driving the 41 Buick Special we had before we left out there. Guess that about covers us out here for now. Surely hope you will write us a good letter telling us how things are going out there.

Cheerio for Now! Heartiest Seasons Greetings and better Health during the New Year! From both of us to both of you, Sincerely, Ira & Gerry